



## Jason E. Mumpower, Comptroller of the Treasury

September 9, 2022

### **Investigation Details Improper Handling of Town of Toone Assets** *Former Police Chief involved in several issues*

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office reveals several problems within the Town of Toone in Hardeman County.

The investigation centers largely on the handling of town assets by the former police chief, who served from 2001 until his resignation in July 2021. Some of the report's findings include:

- The former chief allowed two former police officers to keep their department-issued handguns upon their resignation without proper authorization.
- The former chief initiated and the town board approved the sale of department weapons for \$1 each. These transactions violated the town's purchasing policy and state law.
- The former chief traded his town-issued handgun in exchange for another weapon without proper authorization from the board.
- The former chief retained several of the town's assets at his personal residence, and he allowed a former town employee to retain assets at his personal residence, without proper authorization and any legitimate purpose.
- Under the former chief's oversight, two of town's electric utility carts were left at a repair shop for at least two years.
- Some town assets and \$900 from a trailer sold at auction could not be found or could not be verified as being received.



Investigators have also questioned whether the former chief fully complied with the requirements of the Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO) and the Federal Surplus Personal Property Donation Program (FSPPDP) – programs he used to purchase assets on behalf of the town.

Additionally, investigators reported that a town alderman, who was also a part-time employee of the town's street department, used the town's lawnmower for his personal use and retained the town's bush hog at his personal residence.

Furthermore, the town recorder improperly paid at least four duplicate invoices, and paid an invoice for items the town never received.

Investigators have also raised questions about a bulldozer that the town attempted to sell at public auction. Although the bulldozer sold at auction for a total cost of \$50,893.75, the high bidder was unable to pay, and the sale was cancelled. The next month, the bulldozer was sold to the former Hardeman County mayor for a total cost of \$35,000. Although the mayor claimed to be the second highest bidder at the initial auction,

investigators could not substantiate this information, and therefore question if the bulldozer was sold through proper bidding procedures at the highest possible price.

The results of this investigation were communicated to the Office of the District Attorney General of the 25<sup>th</sup> Judicial District.

“The Town of Toone’s annual audits have disclosed problems with the town’s handling of LESO and FSPPDP assets since at least fiscal year 2015. The town has failed to correct these issues,” said Comptroller Jason Mumpower. “This investigative report should serve as the final catalyst for the town board to improve its oversight and implement policies that protect taxpayer dollars and resources.”

To view the investigative report, go to [tncot.cc/doireports](http://tncot.cc/doireports). To view a map depicting Comptroller investigations, go to [tncot.cc/mappinginvestigations](http://tncot.cc/mappinginvestigations).

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